

## BOOK REVIEWS

THE HOUSE OF GOLD. Lenten Sermons by Fr. Bede Jarrett, O.P. (Sheed & Ward; 7/6.)

It is debatable whether the spoken word, reported verbatim and put into print, retains as an essay anything of its value as oratory. Perhaps no generalisation should be made, but each example be judged on its merits. This much may be admitted: the written word of the speaker may best be appreciated by one who seems to hear while he reads. For those who have listened to the English Provincial, *The House of Gold* will glow with vitality from the first page to the last, and the great practical truths of life contained in it will come to them with a new force and actuality. Others less favoured will miss much of the appeal in the preliminary sermons on Power, Place, Haste, and so on. But none can fail to be moved, and occasionally even thrilled, by the oratory combined with the forceful thought and sane common-sense in the series on *The Forgotten Family*. We envy the New York congregation that listened to the magnificent appeal to the American people to rebuild the home. Even in the written word its power is not lost. In this series *Love*, *Courtship* and *Marriage* are dealt with by one who recognises keenly the practical difficulties and dangers of human companionship but recognises too that Grace and Nature must walk hand in hand. Here is teaching, advice, help and admonition that the Catholic laity, young and old, married or unmarried, cannot afford to be without. We could almost wish that these eighteen sermons alone had gone to the building of the *House of Gold*, and yet the *Sermons in Holy Week* with which the volume ends could scarcely have been omitted for, with a like greatness of vision and of word, they bring before us those elemental forces of Salvation, Charity and Suffering, which alone explain and solve the problems of life.

H.C.

BRITAIN'S ECONOMIC ILLNESS. By Henry Somerville. (Harding & More; 5/-.)

Mr. Somerville, persuaded that our economic weakness is principally due to moral error and defect—to idolatry of material wealth and reliance on self-interest as the ruling motive of action,' also that 'covetousness has been the national sin which is now bringing a terrible retribution,' would rouse us to take thought. A brief historical survey concludes that our post-

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reformation covetousness was 'sanctified by English religion and philosophy, especially by Calvinists and Benthamites, as a providential instinct and national guide to conduct, which enriched the community as well as the individual.' The present position is grave because 'the class war of labour and capital has paralysed British industry and brought it within sight of collapse.' This class war, the author reminds us, 'is the inevitable result of the division of society into capitalists and labourers.' Statistics are quoted to prove that our unemployment is due to 'our failure to hold our own, in world competition.' To make matters worse Britain is ceasing to be a mother country, for 'the British people are now shirking parent-hood more than any other nation in the world.'

Diagnosis is followed by examination of proposed remedies. Rationalisation is shown to be 'more efficacious for aiding British trade than for remedying unemployment. It cheapens production by displacing labour.' As for Empire Free Trade, 'no one has ever attempted to show what Canada (for example) could or would offer Britain that might be accepted as compensation for a tax on imported wheat.' Mr. Somerville states quite frankly his own suggestions. 'A reduction of wages in the sheltered industries is a necessity in the present conditions of British economy.' Next the guild principle claims consideration, and Mr. Somerville proposes 'strong trade unions and associations of employers' as a beginning to guild ownership and control in industry. Profit sharing and co-partnership are favourably regarded. But the conclusion of the whole matter in this most sincere and plainly written treatise is *Ye must be born again*. Otherwise we are lost. 'Perhaps we shall be as Russia' is the mournful cry at the end. Perhaps. And perhaps not. In any case Mr. Somerville's warning is timely and is not to be lightly dismissed. Thought and much care and pains in the statistical argument are evident.

J.C.

WHY I AM AND WHY I AM NOT A CATHOLIC. By Archbishop Goodier, Fr. R. A. Knox, Fr. C. C. Martindale, S.J., Hilaire Belloc, Sheila Kaye-Smith, Dr. Headlam, Professor A. E. Taylor, Professor H. C. Goudge, Rev. W. E. Orchard, and Principal John Oman. (Cassell & Co., pp. 256; 6/- net.)

It is symptomatic of the ever-increasing interest in Catholicism that popular manuals discussing our religion are regularly being offered to the public. This book, intended for that fabu-